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Chapter 1 : History & Hydraulics of Ohio's Canals

The Ohio and Erie Canal was a canal constructed during the 1820s and early 1830s in Ohio. It connected Akron with the Cuyahoga River near its outlet on Lake Erie in Cleveland, and a few years later, with the Ohio River near Portsmouth.

This was not a spur of the moment decision. A commission had already conducted a study to see if it was even possible for a canal to cross the state. The principal goals of the canal was to serve as many voters as possible, connect the Ohio River with Lake Erie, do it as quickly and cheaply as possible, all without throwing the state into bankruptcy. Before the arrival of the first canal, the only way farmers, manufacturers, and travelers had for getting anywhere were poorly constructed roads that were often impassible during the winter and wet spring months. The much anticipated National Road had only reached Wheeling by 1818 and it would be another 16 years before reaching Columbus. By 1830, residents were estimated to be living in the state, with most of them involved in agriculture. The problem with modern agriculture of the day was that they had more produce than they could use and no way to move it beyond their local community. For Ohioans in the early 1800s that solution seemed to be an expensive, somewhat slow moving canal system that could connect with the two major bodies of water around Ohio: Lake Erie that connected farmers with the east coast, and the Ohio River that connected to the Gulf of Mexico. Several years before the Ohio legislature seriously considered a canal system, in New York state, work had begun on building a canal connecting Lake Erie with the Hudson River and ultimately New York City. Route Planning Canal engineers located decided on a route this new transportation system would take. The fastest and most direct route between two points was not as high on their list as was providing a dependable means of transportation, to as many Ohioans as possible. Some politicians even went as far as suggesting the most advantageous route would take a diagonal cut from the northeast to the southwest. Such a canal would pass through or near the major population centers. However desirable this route may have appeared to the politicians, it did not satisfy the engineers. A compromise was struck resulting in two main canals being built, one in the east and one in the west, with numerous smaller canals feeding it. The Ohio canal system had grown to almost 1000 miles. With so many miles of big, water-filled ditches to maintain, it was reaching a critical point where the costs were beginning to outweigh the benefits. It was just about this same time that some new technology was being developed. The invention of the fired steam engine that could power a machine on narrow ribbons of iron, began to become a feasible alternative to the once relatively high-speed 5 mph canal boats. Railroads could transport goods across the country, without regards to a water system. The narrow ribbons of iron could be laid almost anywhere, could cross over canyons go uphill, things that could never be considered with the canals. The growing railroad system brought a slow death to the canal system. However, recent interest in the historic canals has attracted the attention of small Ohio communities to use what remains of the canals as attractions.

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Chapter 2 : Beaver and Erie Canal - Wikipedia

The OHIO AND ERIE CANAL, connecting Lake Erie at Cleveland with the Ohio River at Portsmouth, was constructed by the State of Ohio between to provide cheap transportation and to promote the state's economic development.

Clinton believed that the canal was crucial to the economic advancement of his city. Clinton saw his plan come to fruition in after he became the governor of New York. An Unprecedented Engineering Feat The construction of the Erie Canal, through mountainous terrain and dense rock proved as challenging as the political environment. They cleared the land by hand and animal power and blasted through rock with gunpowder. The original Erie Canal was just four feet deep and 40 feet wide, though it was considered a major engineering feat at the time of its completion in . It traversed nearly miles of fields, forests, and rocky cliffs, and contained 83 locks—structures used for raising and lowering boats between canal stretches with different water levels. Project engineers had little experience building canals. Erie Canal engineers devised new equipment to uproot trees and stumps and invented the first cement that could set and harden underwater. The canal transformed New York City into the commercial capital it remains today. The Erie Canal also provided an economic boost to the entire United States by allowing the transport of goods at one-tenth the previous cost in less than half the previous time. By , the Erie Canal carried 62 percent of all U. For the first time, manufactured goods such as furniture and clothing could be shipped in bulk to the frontier. Farmers in western New York and the Midwest now had cash to purchase consumer goods, because they could more cheaply ship wheat, corn and other crops to lucrative East Coast markets. It attracted vacationers, including Europeans such as Charles Dickens. Impact on Native Americans The building of the Erie Canal and subsequent population explosion along its route accelerated the dispossession—or removal—of Native Americans in western New York and the Upper Midwest. The Erie Canal traversed the ancestral homelands of several groups, including the Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca. Native Americans were sent to reservations in isolated portions of New York and other eastern States. Others were sent to unfamiliar outlying territories in the American Midwest. Some parts were rerouted to make way for more ship traffic in . Portions of the original canal are still operable, though tourism is now the main source of boat traffic along the Erie Canal. Commercial and shipping traffic declined abruptly after the completion of the St. Lawrence Seaway in

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Chapter 3 : Canals - Ohio History Central

The completion of the Erie Canal, connecting the Hudson River in New York with Lake Erie, provided the first navigable water route from the Atlantic Ocean to the upper Midwest. This allowed farmers in Ohio a relatively quick and inexpensive route to transport their products to market.

Both men believed that Ohioans needed quick and easy access to the Ohio River and to Lake Erie if they were to profit financially. Farmers and business owners would be able to transport their products much more easily and cheaply with canals rather than turnpikes. Canals would also hopefully open up new markets for Ohio goods. Its purpose was to hire an engineer to survey a route for a canal that would connect Lake Erie with the Ohio River. The formation of the board was conditioned on the United States government either donating or selling land to the Ohio government for the canal. In 1816, the Ohio legislature realized the importance of internal improvements and created a new Ohio Canal Commission. Geddes proposed three routes. In essence, this first proposed route included a combination of the central and eastern Ohio routes. The Commission also recommended a western route along the Miami and Maumee Valleys. In 1818, the Ohio legislature approved both routes, and work began immediately. On July 21, work began at Middletown on the western canal route. This canal became known as the Miami and Erie Canal. To finance the canals, the Ohio government relied on loans. The legislature established a Canal Fund Commission to regulate the costs of and the securing of money for the canals. Ohio received its initial loan for construction of the canals from bankers and businessmen living along the East Coast. The initial loan was for \$1,000,000 dollars. The canal commissioners estimated that the Ohio and Erie Canal would cost approximately \$20 million. Once construction was completed, the canals combined actually cost 41 million dollars, 25 million dollars of which was interest on loans. The Ohio and Erie Canal cost approximately ten thousand dollars per mile to complete, and the Miami and Erie Canal cost roughly twelve thousand dollars per mile to finish. The canals nearly bankrupted the state government, but they allowed Ohioans to prosper beginning in the 1820s all the way to the Civil War. Canal construction went quickly but not easily. At the peak of construction, more than four thousand workers were laboring on the canals. Private businesses bid on portions of the canals. The state usually accepted the least expensive bids. Once the trench for the canal was dug, workers usually lined it with sandstone. Canal locks also usually consisted of sandstone lined with wood, but sometimes workers made the locks exclusively from wood. The submerged wood would swell, making a waterproof barrier. Workers generally earned thirty cents per day plus room and board. A typical day began at sunrise and did not end until sunset. While thirty cents per day seems a poor wage in modern money, it was attractive to numerous people. Many recent immigrants to the United States, especially the Irish, survived thanks to jobs on the canals. Other people, like the residents of the communal society at Zoar, also helped construct canals to assist the survival of their community. By 1843, the Ohio and Erie Canal was complete. The Miami and Erie Canal would take an additional twelve years to finish, because the state legislature only originally authorized its completion from Cincinnati to just north of Dayton. Once completed, the canals still faced numerous difficulties. Flooding could do serious damage to the locks, walls, and towpaths, requiring extensive repairs. Especially in northern Ohio, cold weather would cause the canals to freeze, also causing damage. Usually canals in the northern half of the state were drained dry from November to April. During the winter months, workers would repair any damage that occurred during the earlier part of the year. In southern Ohio, canals generally stayed open the entire year. The difficulties Ohioans faced with the canals paled in comparison to the advantages that they garnered. Most importantly, the cost to ship goods from the East Coast to Ohio and vice versa declined tremendously from \$100 dollars per ton of goods to twenty-five dollars per ton of goods. While horseback was much quicker, it also cost a great deal more. Most canals remained in operation in Ohio until the late 1800s. There is a short stretch in the Muskingum Valley near Zanesville still in operation today. By the 1850s, however, canals were losing business to the railroads. Railroads had several advantages over the canals, which made the railroads much more popular. While railroads cost

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more to ship people and goods, they could deliver people and items much more quickly than the canals. Railroads also were not limited by a water source like canals were. As a result of these advantages, railroads quickly supplanted the canals.

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Chapter 4 : Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail

Several years before the Ohio legislature seriously considered a canal system, in New York state, work had begun on building a canal connecting Lake Erie with the Hudson River and ultimately New York City.

George Washington discussed the possibility of building a canal to connect Lake Erie with the Ohio River as far back as the 1790s, but it was not until 1825 that the Ohio Legislature voted to fund the project and construction commenced. The canal almost instantly turned Cleveland into a major commercial center. Goods like wheat, corn, coal, and lumber came north to Cleveland from the frontier while manufactured products from factories in the northeast arrived in Cleveland in return. Travel by road at this time - in places where actual roads existed - was unreliable and expensive. The canal dramatically cut the cost of transporting goods. It opened up new markets for manufactured goods, and tied Americans living at the margins of the nation into an expanding national economy. The banks of the Cuyahoga River soon became populated with warehouses, docks, and shipyards. It was not long before the area became a center of industrial production as enterprising Clevelanders started turning the raw materials arriving from the hinterlands via the canal into new and highly demanded products like steel and petroleum. Many of the Irish immigrants who built the canal remained in town to work in these new industries. Already by then, railroads were taking over as the dominant mode of transportation. Cleveland, which had - thanks to the canal - already established itself as a major city, continued to prosper. Raw materials and finished goods poured into and out of town, but they did so on boxcars instead of canal boats. The canal gradually fell into disuse. Steel factories tapped into it for use in their mills and flooding occasionally wiped out portions of it. Other federal and local projects have preserved many sections of the canal. [Media Video](#) To view this video please enable JavaScript, and consider upgrading to a web browser that supports HTML5 video [Reinventing the Canal](#) Dan Rice describes how the canal has remained relevant through reinvention. Railroads became the dominant form of commercial transportation around the time of the Civil War, quickly making canals obsolete. An advertisement for a Cleveland grocer demonstrates some of the commerce being created in the city by the Ohio and Erie Canal. Farmers from the interior would send their crops especially wheat north to the city, while imported and manufactured goods arrived in Cleveland from the east and were then purchased by farmers and city dwellers alike. Around the time of the Civil War, however, Cleveland changed from having a mainly commercial economy and became itself a center of manufacturing and heavy industry. [Image courtesy of Library of Congress Canal Map](#), Near the bottom of this map can be seen the point where the Ohio and Erie Canal merged with the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland. In 1827, the state constructed a weigh lock near this site. This photograph from [1827](#) illustrates the origins of the term "towpath. It now houses a visitors center that features historical exhibits about the canal.

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Chapter 5 : Ohio and Erie Canal - Wikipedia

The Ohio and Erie Canal was completed in between Cleveland and Portsmouth, Ohio. This mile-long canal was the final link in an inland waterway connecting the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River System.

The proposed canal would consist of 59 miles of canalized rivers and a land canal of . This collection of engineering reports, legal briefs, hearings before the U. Congress, and photographs provides an outline for arguments both for and against the project. Champions of the canal were the U. The steel mills desired this canal to transport iron ore from the Great Lakes to the Youngstown steel plants. The mills were, in their opinion, forced to rely on the railroads for transportation. The canal, in their thinking, would free them from paying the high fares for iron ore delivery by the railroads from sources in Pennsylvania and West Virginia. The main opposition to the canal project was the Upper Ohio Valley Association, "an unincorporated association with approximately members, consisting, among others of steel companies, railroads, labor organizations, municipal and trade organizations, etc. The Pittsburgh and Lake Erie railroads especially played a prominent part, leading the effort against the canal. The Grand River Reservoir was a much-opposed part of the canal project. At that point would begin a reservoir stretching north across Trumbull County. The planned reservoir, flowing across Ashtabula County and ending just below Ashtabula township on Lake Erie, would flood tens of thousands of acres of farmland and small towns. The last section of the canal would be constructed from the northern tip of the reservoir through Geneva Township. Landmark events in the unborn life of this canal include the passage of the River and Harbor Act of , which provided funding for the U. Army Corps of Engineers to study the proposed canal further. The collection includes updated estimates of cost by the railroads, as the controversy and opposition to the canal continued. Army Corps of Engineers recommended canal construction as late as ; funds were allocated in and for continued feasibility studies. In the Corps concluded that although it believed the Canal was "practical from both navigation and engineering aspects, [it] would not be economically justifiable" to build. Provenance of this collection is unknown. Some materials in the file were produced by proponents of the canal. Variant items include a few documents regarding proposed construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway, and iron ore mining in Venezuela. The collection is arranged into the following series.

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Chapter 6 : Lake Erie - Ohio History Central

-J-SUBJECT: CANAL TO CONNECT LAKE ERIE WITH THE OHIO RIVER TO: The District Engineer United States Engineer Office Pittsburgh, Pa. I am William E. Fowler, Chairman of the Traffic Committee.

Background[edit] The canal figures prominently in this lithograph view of Cincinnati. When Ohio became a state in 1803, transportation to and within the state was difficult; settlers largely moved themselves and their goods on rivers and Lake Erie, for most roads were poor. In addition, Ohio was geographically separated from the East Coast by the barrier of the Appalachian Mountains. This made life difficult for early citizens because goods from the Atlantic Coast and Europe were difficult to obtain and often very expensive due to transportation costs. For the same reasons, it was difficult for Ohio businessmen and farmers to sell their products to markets outside the state. Some entrepreneurs began to ship goods from Ohio down the Ohio River to New Orleans, by sailing ship and keelboats, but the journey was long and costly. Even after steamboats arrived, it was difficult to return vessels upriver. High shipping costs severely limited trade and population growth in the state, especially in areas far from natural waterways such as Lake Erie or the Ohio River, which bounded the state on the north and south, respectively. In 1806, Senator Thomas Worthington of Ohio who later became governor asked the Secretary of the Treasury for funds to improve roads and build canals in Ohio, yet did not have much success. The United States Congress approved national canal legislation in 1807, 1810, and 1815, but each bill was vetoed by the sitting president. The Erie Canal in New York proved to be an early success after it was completed in 1825. The canal was largely state-funded, using money acquired from selling off land near where the canals were to be dug. The state government planned and built two canals in the state: This system provided the interior of Ohio with new travel routes that effectively extended to the major Atlantic port of New York City, as merchants could ship goods through Lake Erie, the Erie Canal, and the Hudson River to New York. Construction[edit] Because Ohio is not entirely flat, the system of locks had to be designed to act as a staircase so boats could navigate the difference in elevation. To supply water for the canal, manmade reservoirs such as Grand Lake St. Marys and Lake Loramie in Shelby County were constructed, along with several feeder canals. Indian Lake in Logan County was greatly enlarged to provide a steadier supply of water for the Sidney feeder canal. Branch canals were built to serve as extensions from the main canal. This branch was opened in 1833, but remained in operation less than 15 years before being abandoned. The following list includes measurement standards for the canal, although these varied by region of the state. All slopes are 4. Braces have been installed to prevent the lock from caving in. The Miami and Erie never proved to be as profitable as the state government had hoped, as within several years of being completed to Lake Erie it had to compete with railroads. These offered greater speed and capacity for both passengers and goods. Second, while New York had one canal that was located at the bottleneck of Great Lakes trade, Ohio had two canals, which spread usage too thinly. Third, was the expense of building and maintaining the canals. Compared to operations of the Erie Canal, the Ohio canal system had less trade and fewer passengers, while it had to operate over a longer length, and at a greater expense. The canal was completed just before most of the railroads in Ohio were built, and it had to compete directly with railroads for the remainder of its operation. Due to the canal freezing over in the winter, as well as the slowness of the boats, the canal was less practical than railroads, especially for perishable goods and passenger traffic. Although the canal services were often cheaper than the railroads, particularly for bulk cargoes such as grain and salted pork, the canal had largely ceased to operate by 1850. The catastrophic Great Dayton Flood of 1853 and the subsequent flood control measures constructed by the Miami Conservancy District destroyed much of the canal infrastructure along the southern portion of the route, where it paralleled the Great Miami River. The canal was permanently abandoned. What was not destroyed was no longer maintained, and slowly many of the remaining locks and sections of canal were destroyed, with the open canal filled in. Much of the original towpath was redeveloped as the

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right-of-way for the Cincinnati and Lake Erie Railroad , an electric interurban streetcar that operated until Part of the right-of-way was converted to the Wright-Lockland Highway now part of Interstate The surface was later paved over to form Central Parkway, as funds ran out before the Cincinnati Subway could be completed. In the central and northern regions, a large portion of the canal was destroyed when it was filled in to create I and U. Some smaller portions of right-of-way have been converted to bike trails for recreational and local commuting use. Note the captain steering the canal boat and the towing mule on the towpath on the far side. The canal is wide enough to permit two barges to pass. Although urban development has destroyed most vestiges of the canal, some locks and sections of the waterway have survived. One of the original locks 17 is located in the Carillon Historical Park in Dayton. This segment includes an intact concrete weir near the abandoned Vandalia water treatment plant aka "Tadmor Station" and a ruined lock 16, "Picayune" about halfway to Tipp City along Canal Road. The canal remains in water and navigable for canoes or kayaks in the rural region between Delphos and St. From north to south along State Route 66 , sections of the original canal are visible in Delphos, at a small historic park located at the Deep Cut in Spencerville , Lock Two a hamlet mostly consisting of period brick buildings , New Bremen , Minster , Fort Loramie , and Piqua. National Historic Landmark near Spencerville. The Piqua Historical Area [6] features a replica canal boat and other related items. Much of the canal corridor continues as a prosperous manufacturing area; today Interstate 75 and railroads provide the chief transportation means. An historical reenactment of the Miami-Erie canal days is held during summer and early fall months at Providence Metropark along the Maumee River just west of Toledo near Grand Rapids. Historical actors dress and act as if it is during the months of May–October. Two mules pull the canal boat titled The Volunteer, while workers man the tiller and provide commentary to the passengers. Providence Metroparks boasts using original lock 44 as part of the tour. That lock is the only working lock in the state of Ohio. The northern portion of the towpath from Fort Loramie to Delphos and beyond is used as a hiking trail. The canal was constructed parallel to the Maumee River to Defiance, from where it was constructed in a southerly route to Cincinnati.

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Chapter 7 : Ohio and Erie Canal | Cleveland Historical

Historical Note: Big interests clashed in Northeastern Ohio with the proposed construction of a shipping canal from the Ohio River in Pennsylvania's Beaver and Lawrence counties, north through Ohio's Trumbull and Ashtabula counties, terminating in Lake Erie near Ashtabula, Ohio.

Wherever this man-made ditch went, change followed: In the wake of the canal came prosperity, a national transportation system, and a national market economy. As you travel on the Towpath Trail, consider how the canal beside you once transformed the country. For more information visit [ohioanderiecanalway](#). Many European settlers came west to places like the Cuyahoga Valley seeking rich land to farm. Once here, most settlers struggled just to be self-sufficient. Even if they could raise a crop, getting surplus to markets required a journey of more than a month. The prices paid for these goods hardly made the journey worthwhile. The United States was still new: In the East, the economy depended on imports from Europe. The West had no efficient way to export goods over the Appalachian Mountains. The Erie Canal opened in 1819, immediately benefiting New York and beyond. The Erie Canal was the beginning of a national transportation system, connecting ports on the Great Lakes with eastern markets. To reach into the Midwest, America needed canals built farther inland. Seeing the benefits of the Erie Canal, Ohio caught canal fever. By 1825, plans to link Lake Erie with the Ohio River were underway. Many routes were under consideration, but a continental divide in northern Ohio created a major obstacle. The Cuyahoga River and the nearby Portage lakes could supply that water. When Simon Perkins offered land in what is now Akron, the state decided to route the canal through the Cuyahoga Valley. It took two years of hand digging to complete the section from Cleveland to Akron, and five more years to finish all the sections. Dug largely by Irish and German immigrants, this four-foot-deep ditch stretched miles to Portsmouth on the Ohio River. By the fall of 1827, the canal promised passage from Cleveland to Cincinnati in 80 hours, a trip that had once taken weeks. Changes Brought by the Canal Records indicate immediate profits from the canal. Six years later, 100,000 barrels of flour, flowed through Cleveland, headed east to places like New York City. Other businesses began to grow and flourish along the canal. People built stores and taverns to fill the needs of the farmers and canal travelers. New foods, such as foodways baking powder, were imported, which made use of new technology—the cook stove and Ohio-made cast ironware. Recipes, fashion, news, and ideas now traveled at unheard of rates. Where information had taken 30 days to arrive in Ohio from New York, it now took a mere 10 days. Cities boomed wherever the canal went. As people moved to Ohio, the canals provided the nation with mobility. By 1830, due largely to the canal and the people it brought, Ohio was the third most populated state. Americans were able to buy and sell more basic goods with each other, lessening their dependence on foreign imports. Afterwards, some use of the canal continued. For example, a steel mill in Cleveland purchased the canal water for industrial purposes and keeps water in a section north of State Route 2. Realizing the history and scenic values of the canal and its surroundings, in the 1970s citizens began to campaign for their preservation. This national heritage area continues to improve life here in Northeast Ohio. The canal no longer carries goods, news, or people. Instead, its adjacent Towpath Trail transports hikers, cyclists, and horse riders. Experience live lock demonstrations while discovering the history of the canal. Learn more about Canal Exploration Center [here](#). Check our online calendar of events for Lock Demonstrations Last updated:

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Chapter 8 : Ohio & Erie Canals Officially Become Historically Significant - Scioto Post

George Washington discussed the possibility of building a canal to connect Lake Erie with the Ohio River as far back as the 1790s, but it was not until that the Ohio Legislature voted to fund the project and construction commenced.

History[edit] Ohio, which achieved statehood during 1803, remained a sparsely populated region of 50, persons who were scattered throughout the state and who had no means of transporting goods economically out of the state. Without easy access to distant markets, agriculture served only local needs and large-scale manufacturing was nearly non-existent. On January 15, 1815, the Ohio General Assembly passed a resolution expressing its opinion that the connection of the Great Lakes with the Hudson River was a project of "national concern". President Madison was against the proposal, however, and the War of 1812 ended official discussion. Due to the cost, however, the Ohio Legislature dallied, and nothing happened for the next 3 years. Survey and design [edit] On January 31, 1818, the Ohio Legislature passed a resolution to employ an engineer and appoint commissioners to survey and design the canal system as soon as possible. James Geddes, an engineer whose past work included experience on the New York canals, was employed. Since canals must generally follow river valleys, it was difficult to design a suitable system. Specifically, the bridging of the Scioto and Miami river valleys required raising the canal to such an elevation that water from neither river could be used as a source. During later years this second canal would be extended all the way to the Maumee River at Toledo. Copies of the original survey plat maps for the construction of both Ohio canals are available on-line [6] from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The notes issued were to be redeemable between 1818 and 1825. These limits were often exceeded, and indeed it was cheaper to do so in most cases. For example, it might be cheaper to build one embankment and then let the water fill all the way to a hillside parallel, perhaps hundreds of feet away, rather than build two embankments. By damming the rivers, long stretches of slackwater could be created which, with the addition of towpaths, could serve as portions of the canal. Where it made economic sense to do so, such as lock widths or portions of the canal through narrow rock or across aqueducts, the minimum widths were adhered to. Grubbing and clearing, Mucking and ditching, Embankment and excavation, Locks and culverts, Puddling, and Protection. Initially, contractors in general proved to be inexperienced and unreliable. It was common for one job to receive 50 bids, many of them local to where the work was being performed. The chosen contractor, having underbid the contract, often would abscond leaving his labor force unpaid and his contract unfulfilled. This problem was so bad that many laborers refused to perform canal work for fear of not being paid. As the bidding process was improved, and more reliable contractors engaged, the situation improved. At that time, cash money was scarce in Ohio forcing much bartering. Working on the canal was appealing and attracted many farmers from their land. Graph showing the annual expenditures and revenues accrued to the State of Ohio by the Ohio and Erie Canal from 1825 to 1847. During the next five years, more and more portions of the canal opened, with it finally being completed during 1847. During 1847, the Ohio and Erie Canal was completed. In addition, there were five feeder canals that added

Chapter 9 : Miami and Erie Canal - Wikipedia

Unlike the Ohio & Erie, the Miami & Erie Canal was not initially conceived as a route from Lake Erie to the Ohio River. The Miami & Erie Canal was in operation from Middletown to Cincinnati in 1822, and in 1825, the 17 miles were completed to Dayton.